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Holcomb

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(54) **ERGONOMIC PLECTRUM**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
G10D 3/16 (2020.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G10D 3/163*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G10D 3/163
See application file for complete search history.

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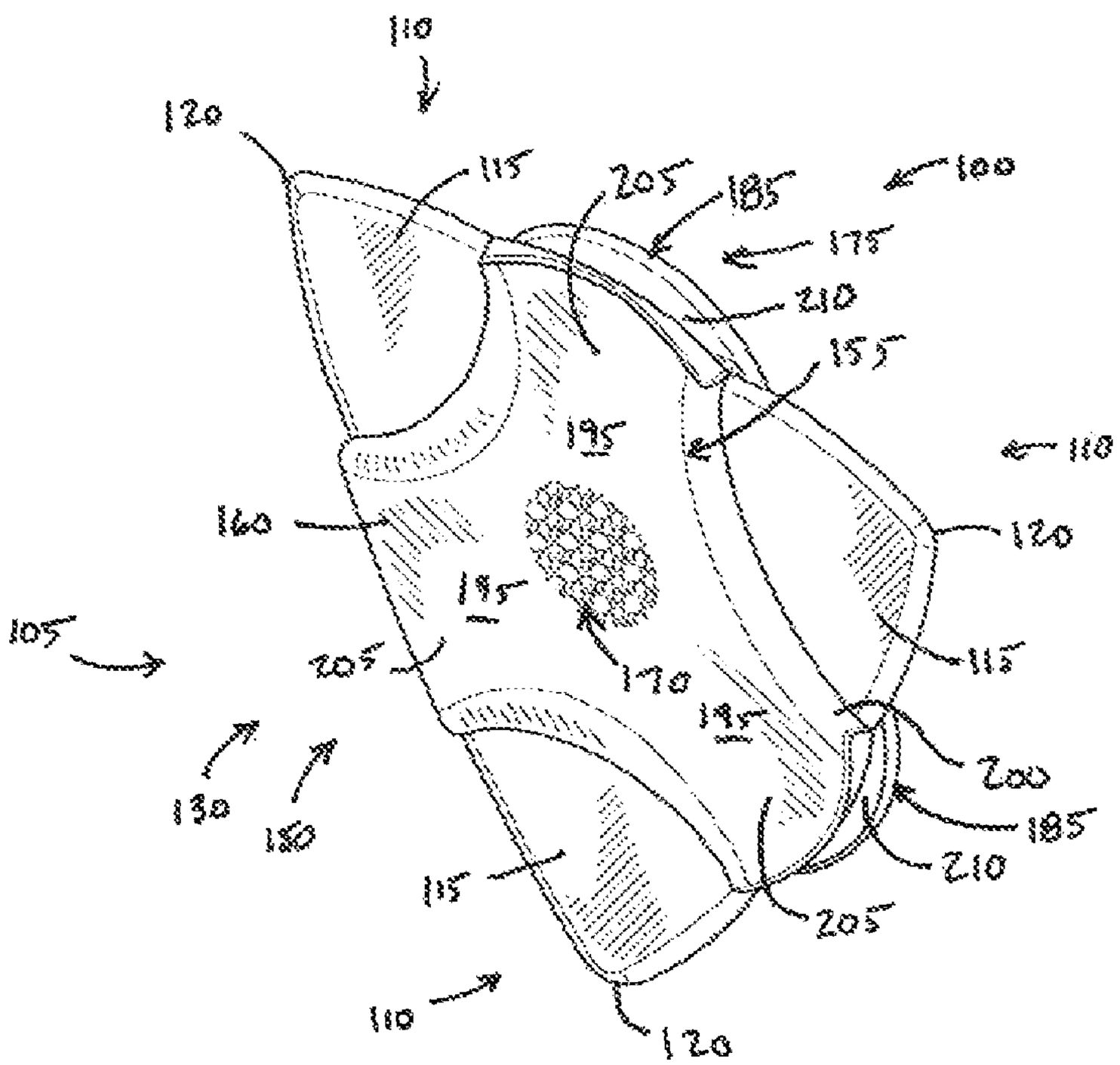
Primary Examiner — Kimberly R Lockett

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A plectrum for strumming a stringed instrument comprises a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery. The body has one or more pick tips having an edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument. An ergonomic contour is provided on the front side and/or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour having a protrusion that extends radially from the center portion toward the periphery, the protrusion having one or more projections or recesses. The ergonomic contour creates a surface that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum and reducing stress. The pick tips on the body may each be different. A method of using the plectrum includes rotating the plectrum between the fingers from one pick tip to another.

20 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



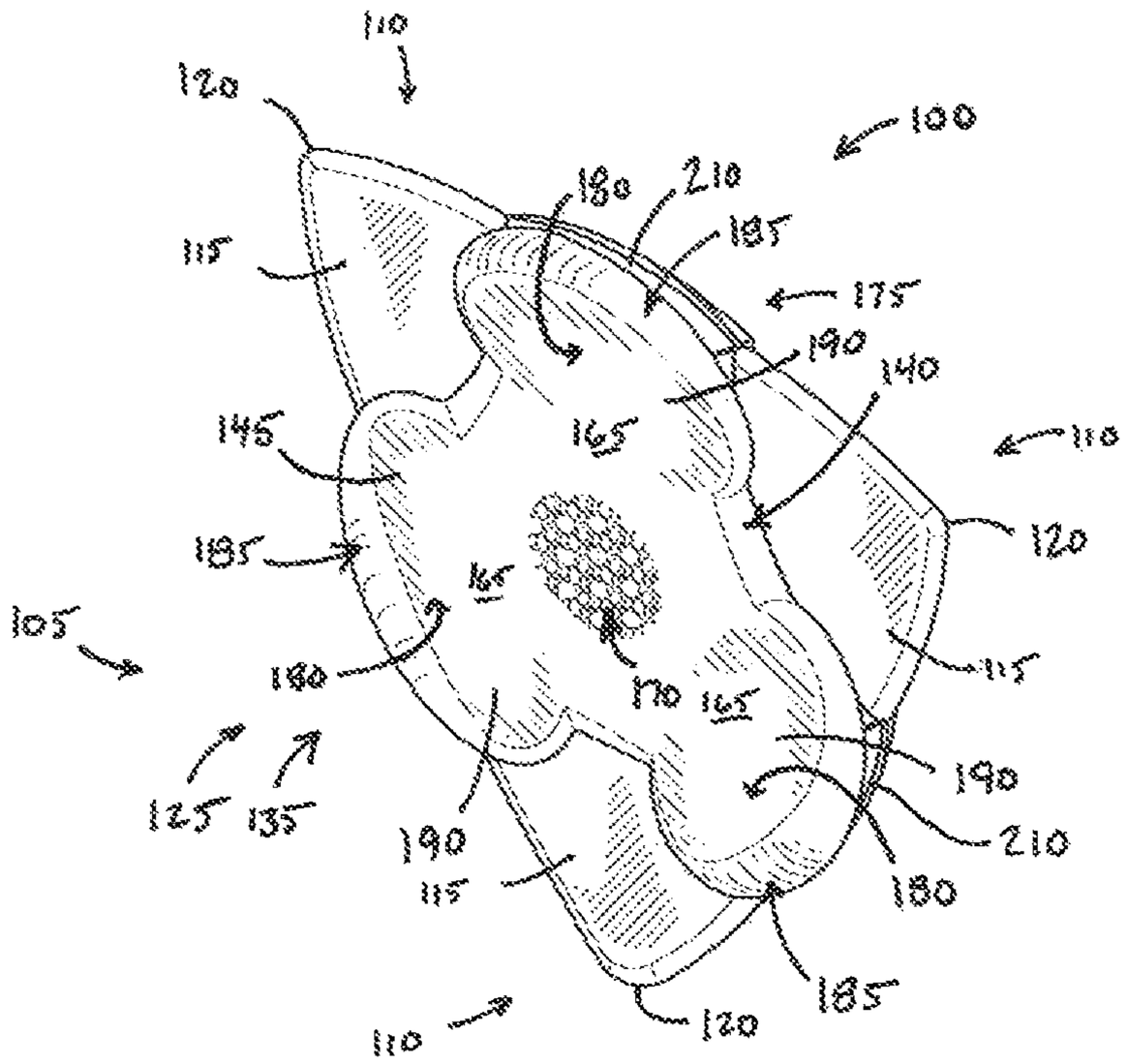

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FIG. 1A

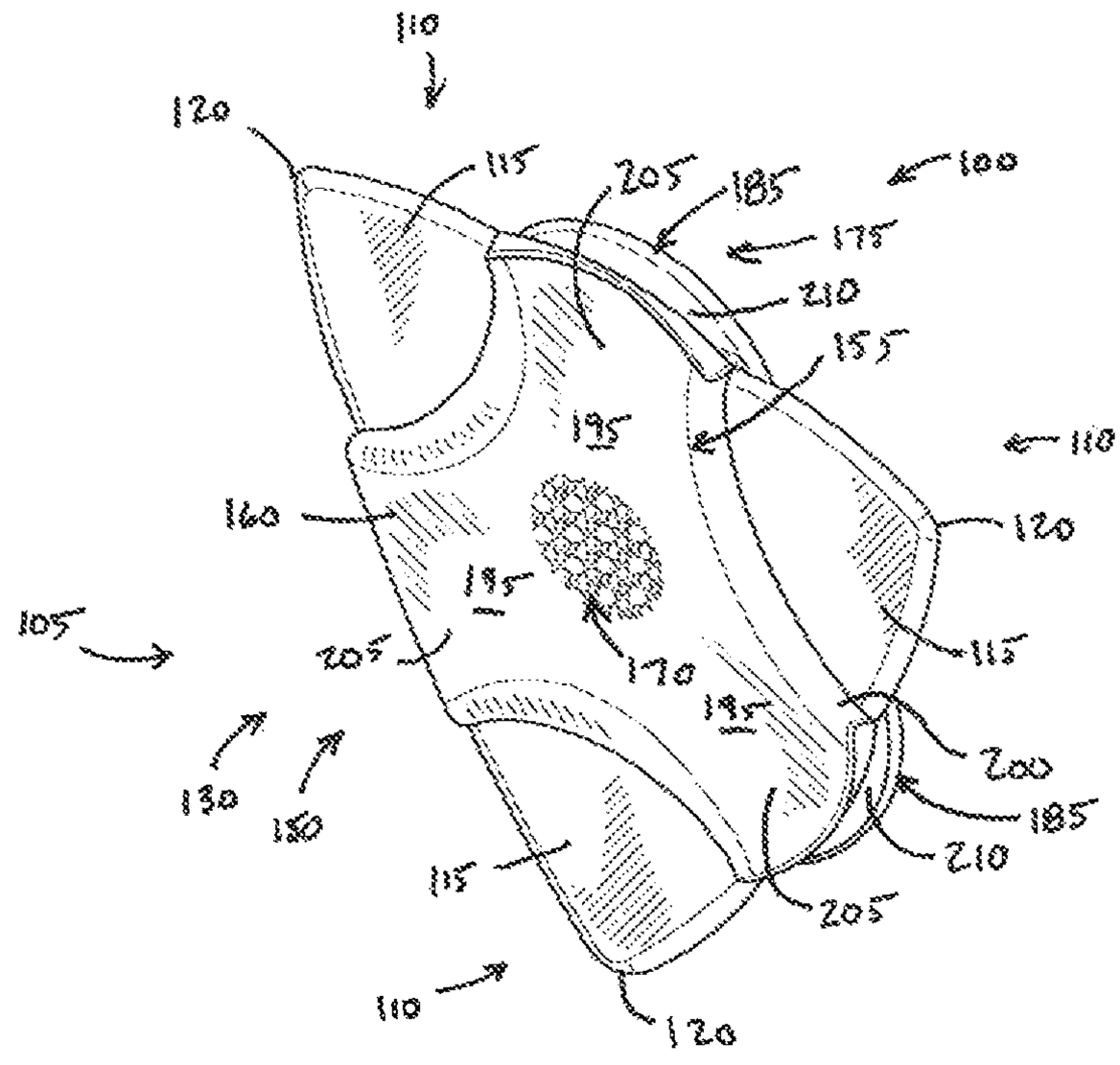
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FIG. 1B

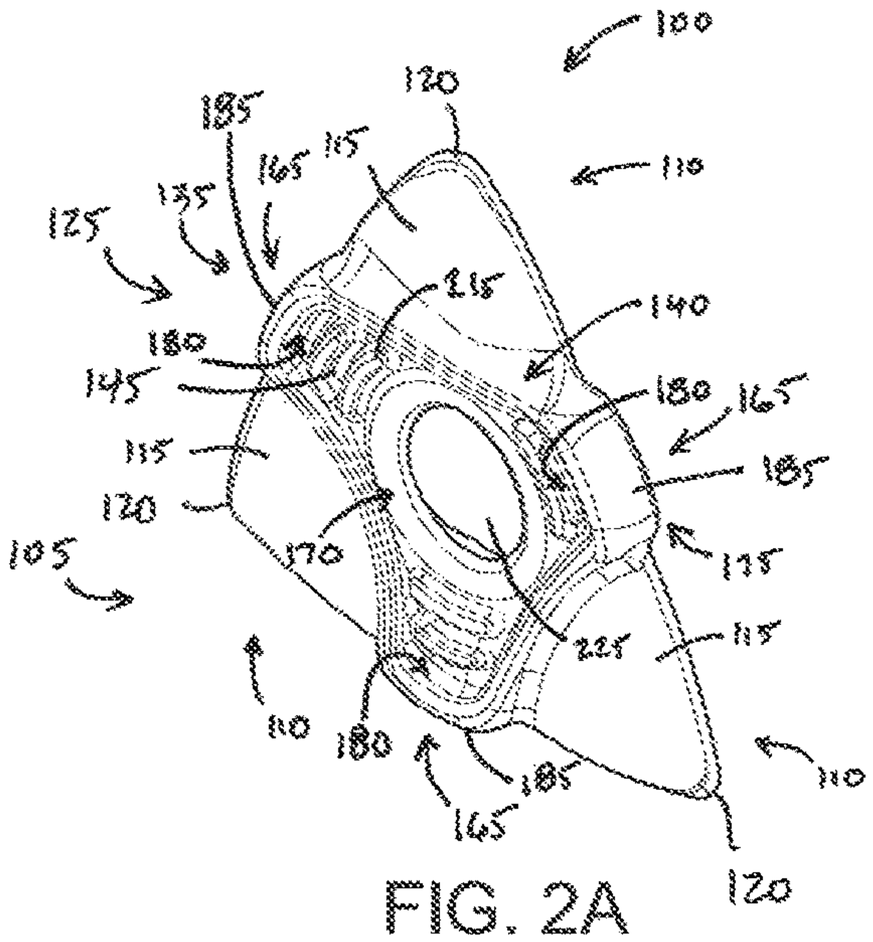

FIG. 2A

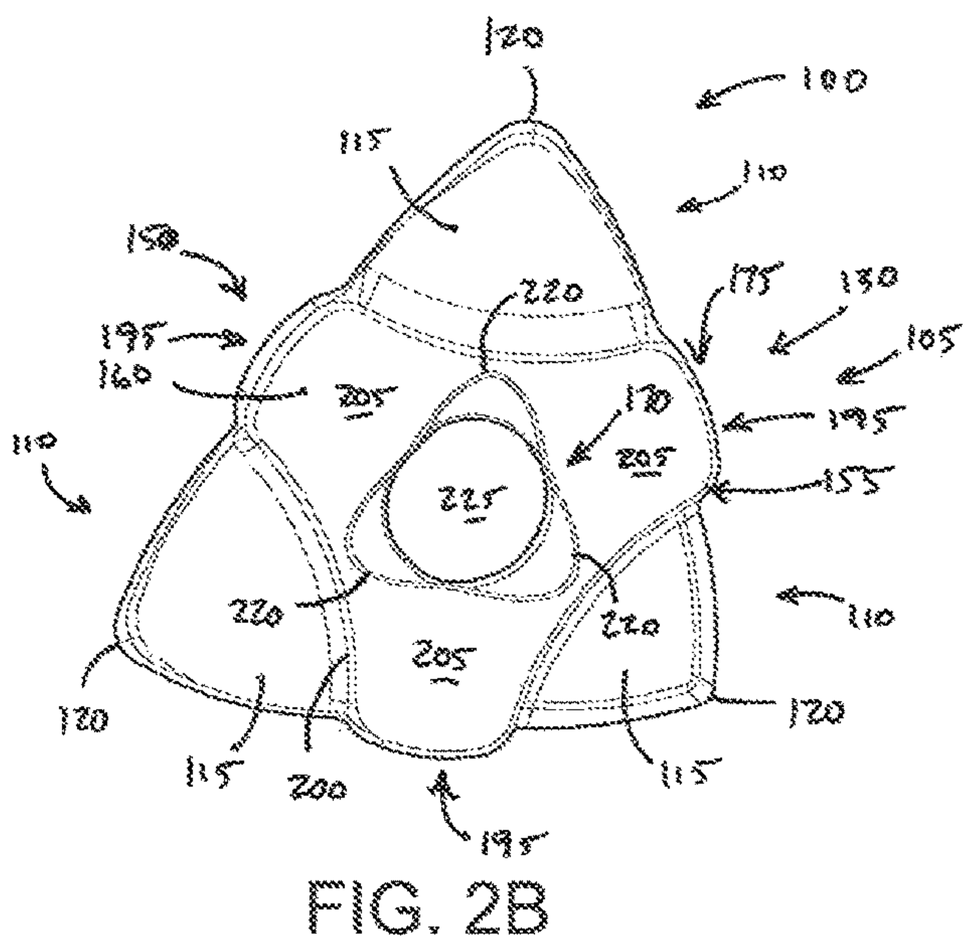

FIG. 2B

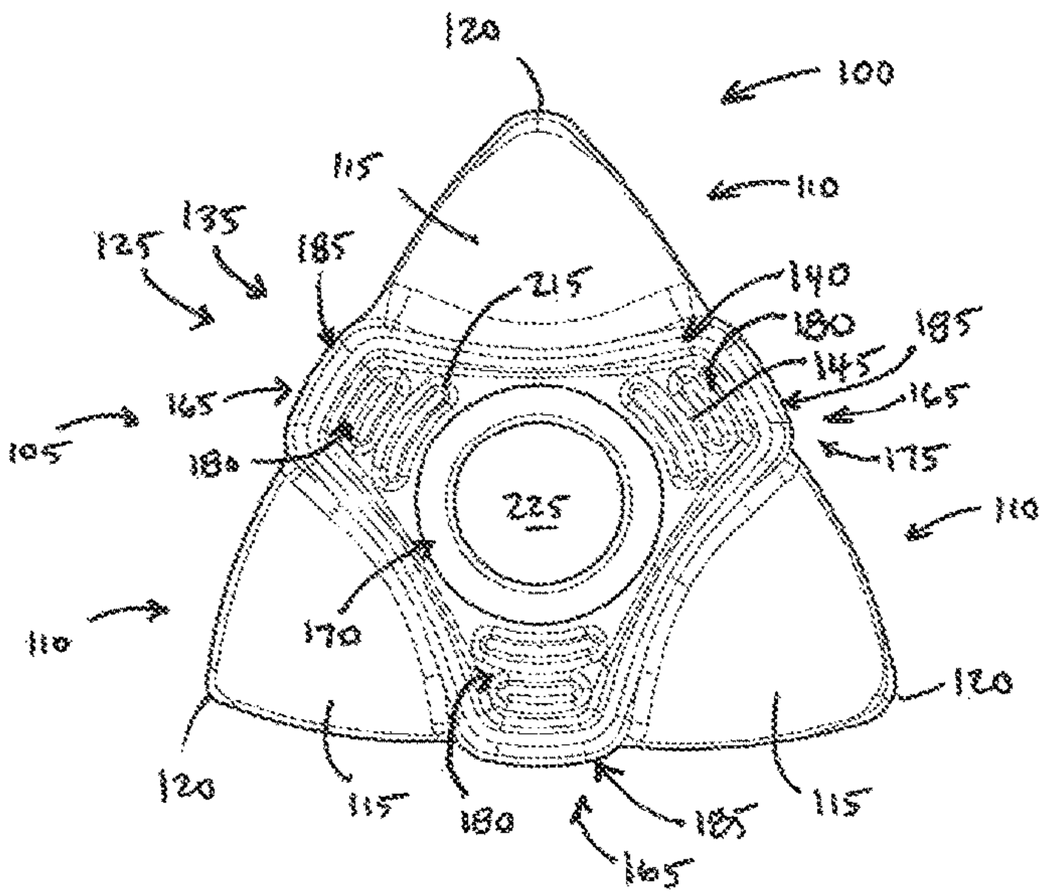

FIG. 2C

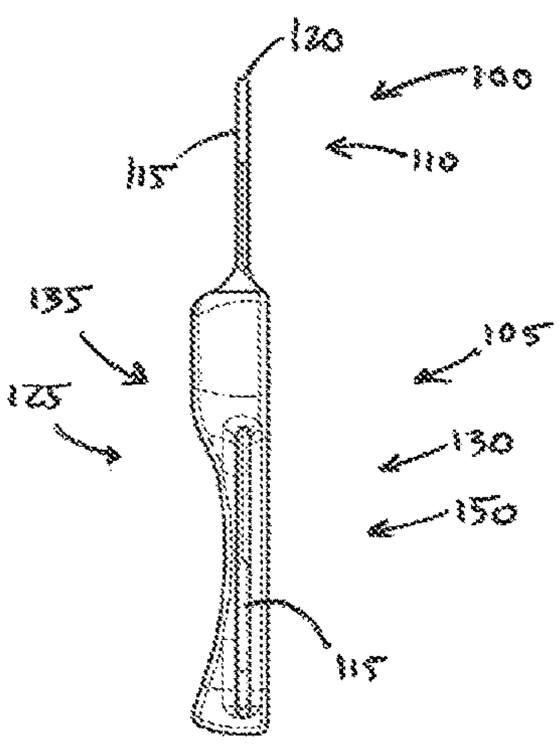

FIG. 2D

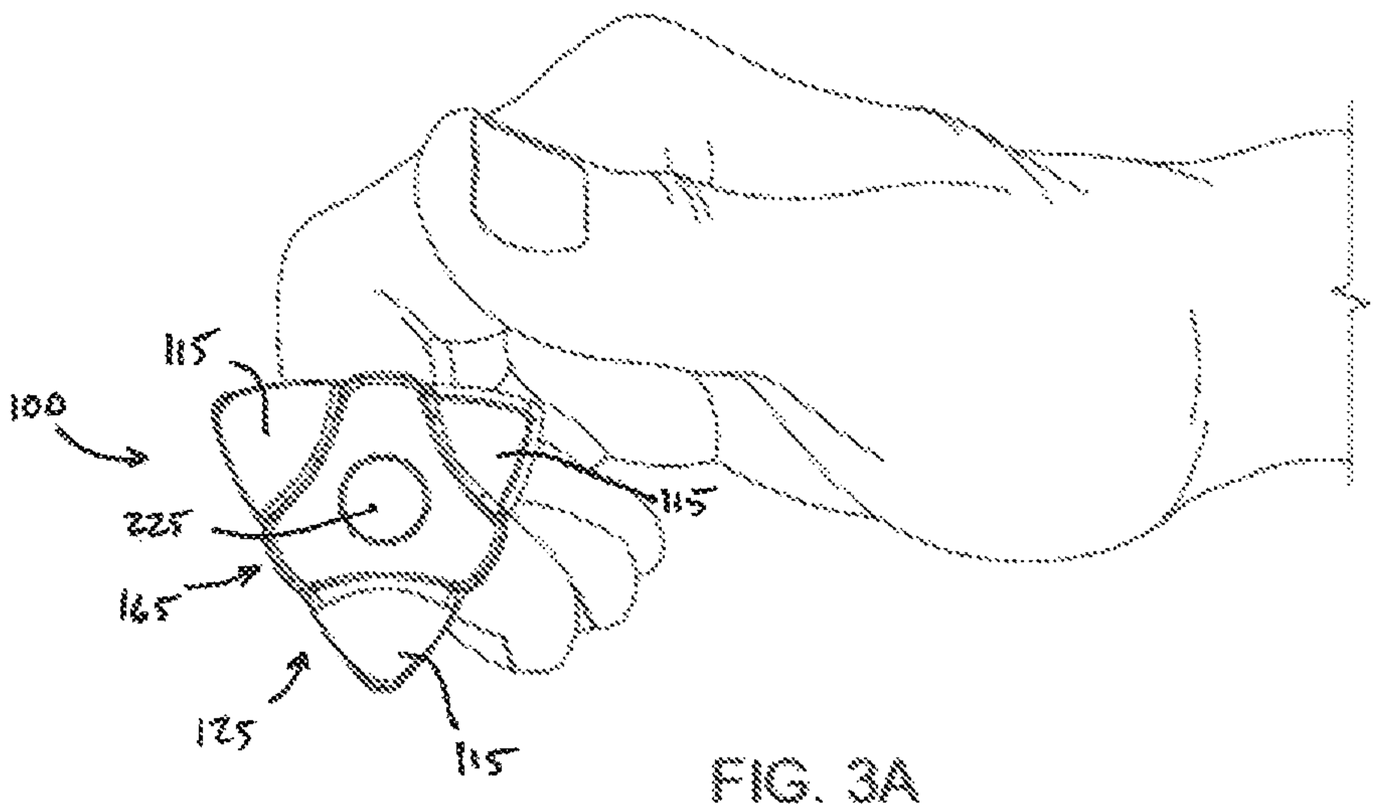

FIG. 3A

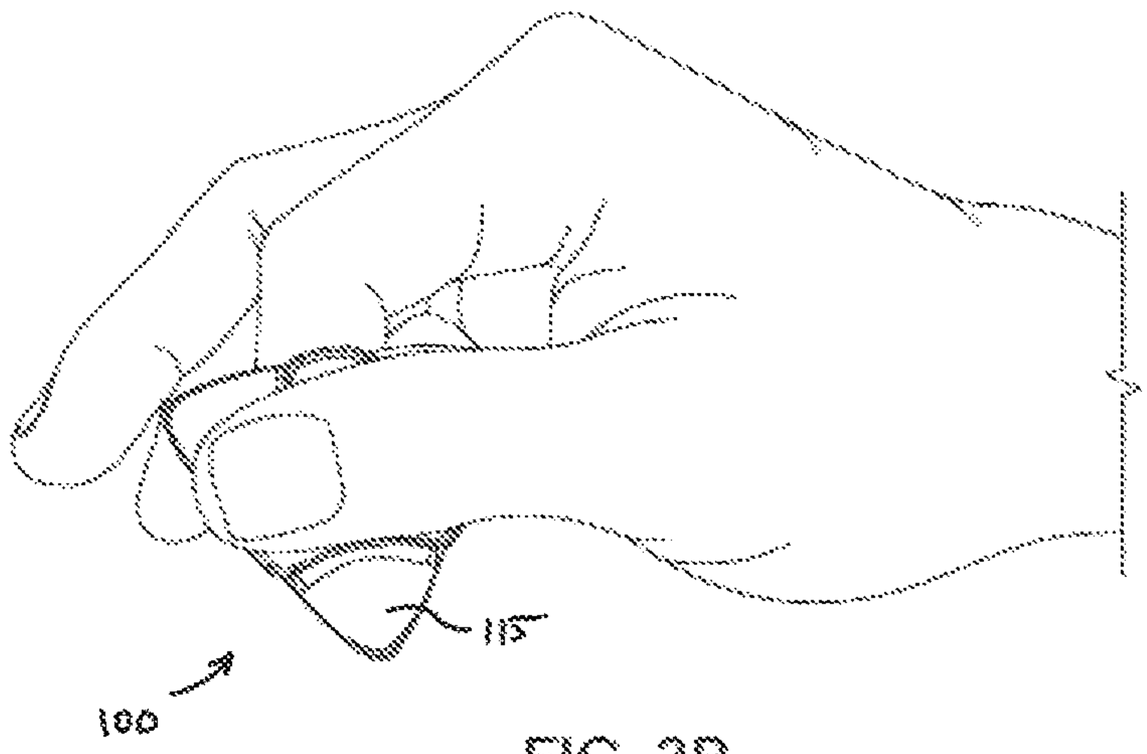

FIG. 3B

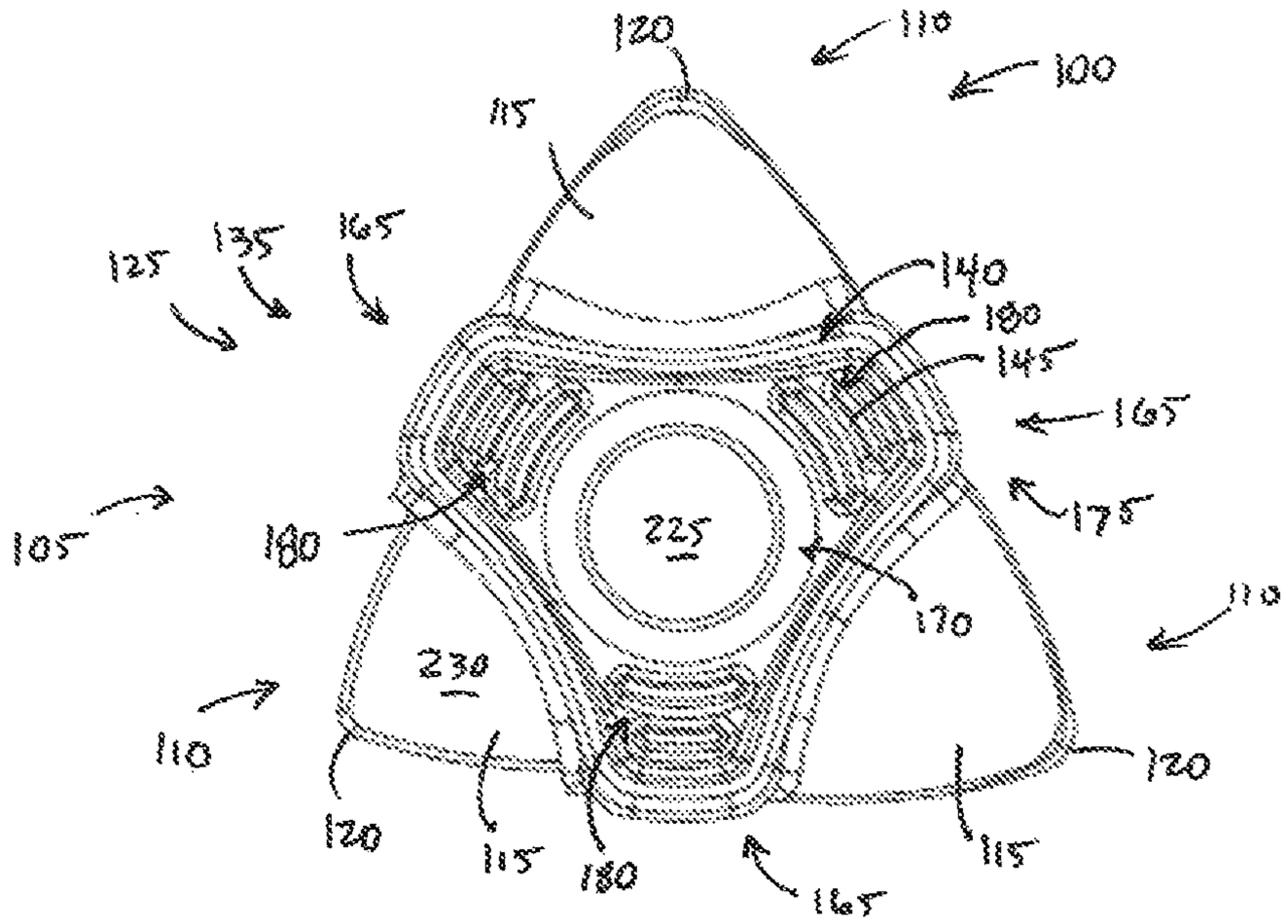
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FIG. 4A

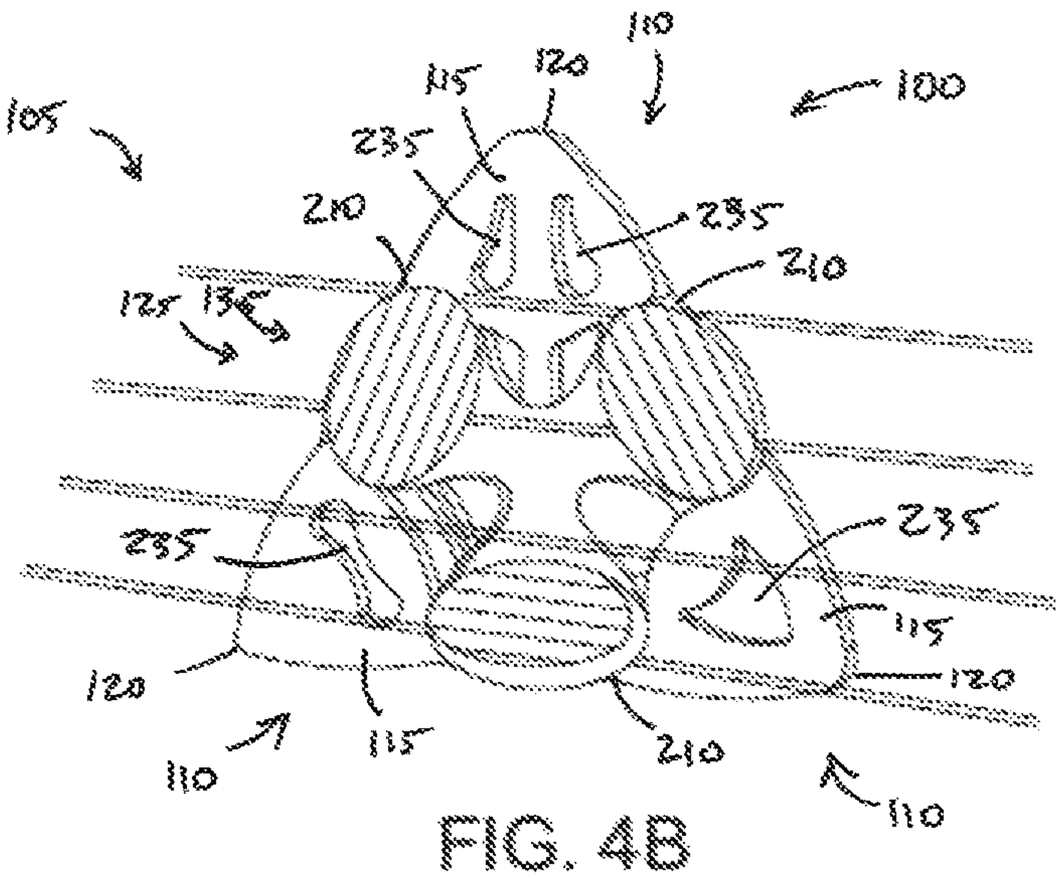
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FIG. 4B

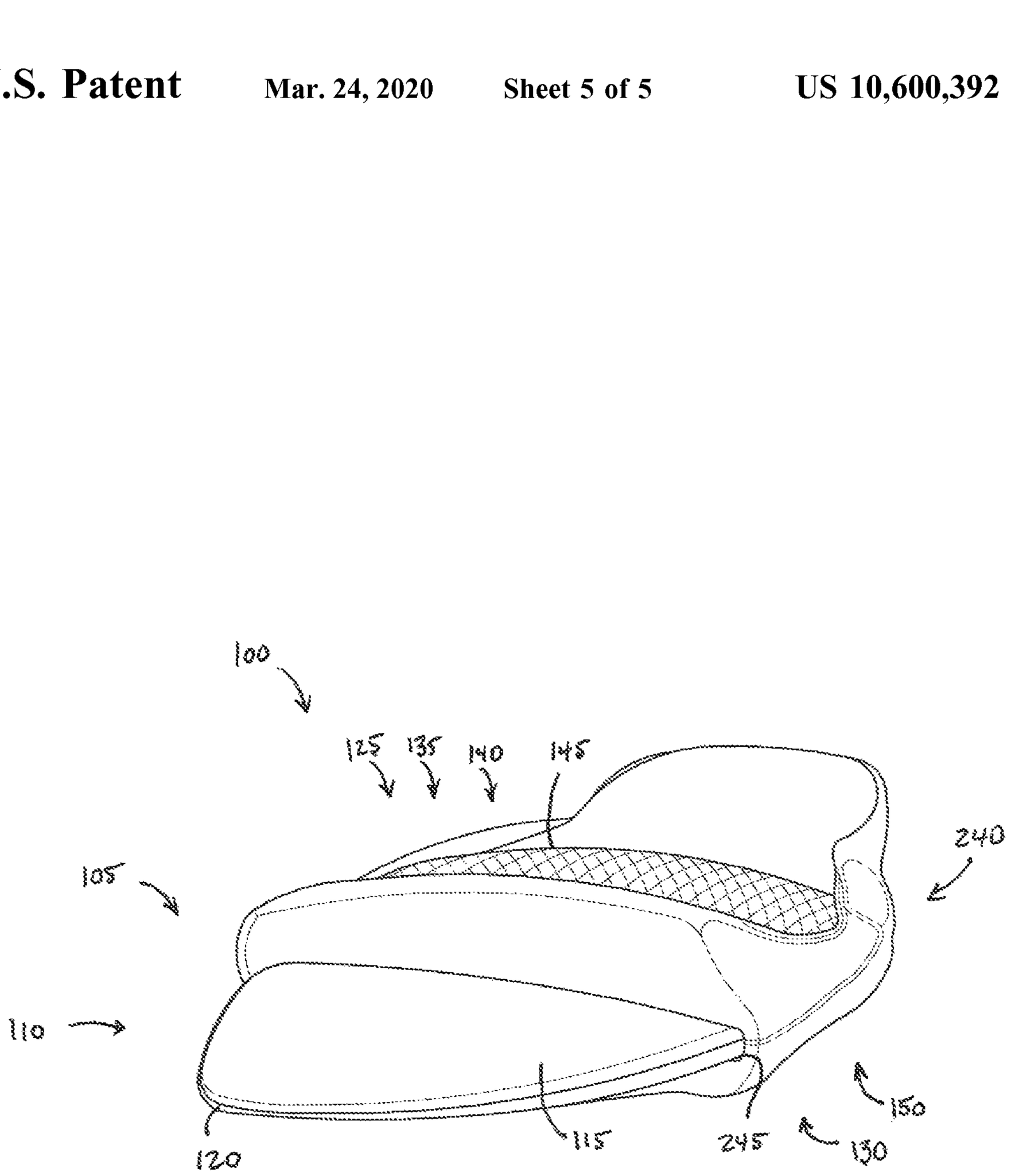

FIG. 5

ERGONOMIC PLECTRUM

PRIORITY

The present application claims the benefit of domestic priority based on U.S. Provisional Patent Application 62/626,654 filed on Feb. 5, 2018, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

Almost everyone wants to play the guitar. Whether it is being able to sit around a campfire and play folk songs, serenade a loved one, or be the star on the stage in a rock band, everyone dreams of being a guitar idol. However, few realize the rigors and physical demands of prolonged playing of a guitar and other stringed instruments.

Guitarists are some of the most vulnerable musicians to hand injuries. Repetitive strain injuries or injuries of the musculoskeletal and/or nervous systems caused by repetitive tasks, forceful exertions, vibrations, mechanical compression, or sustained or awkward positions are particularly prevalent for guitar players. Examples of common problems include nerve compression syndromes, such as carpel tunnel syndrome and cubital tunnel syndrome. Tendonitis or inflammation of the tendons is also common in the wrist of a guitar player. Other ailments include tennis elbow, focal dystonia, and arthritis.

Surprisingly it is often the strumming hand rather than or in addition to the fret hand that develops the repetitive strain injuries. A plectrum, also known as a pick, is a traditionally flat tool used to pluck or strum a stringed instrument. Playing a guitar with a plectrum produces a bright sound compared to plucking with the fingertip. Plectrums also offer a greater contrast in tone across different plucking locations. For these reasons and more, most guitar players prefer to use a plectrum when playing. Thus, the strumming hand of a guitar player is often holding a plectrum by squeezing it between the thumb and one or more other fingers while the hand is making a strumming motion. These muscular stresses and awkward movements together over time can lead to fatigue and/or injury of the hand, such as one or more of the injuries discussed above.

Plectrum design has been largely unchanged since its first introduction as a flat surface in the late nineteenth century. Though different materials have been used and different thicknesses of the plectrum have been manufactured, very little has been done in terms of designing a plectrum that is more comfortable for the guitar player to hold and that reduces the likelihood of hand fatigue and injury. In addition, because of the uniform size and shape of a plectrum, only a single sound can be produced using conventional plectrums. Furthermore, because of their generally flat shape, plectrums are difficult to store and are easy for the guitarist to misplace.

There is therefore a need for a plectrum that is ergonomically designed and that has improved handleability. There is a further need for a plectrum that reduces hand fatigue and reduces the likelihood of hand injury. There is a further need for a plectrum that can produce multiple sounds. There is still a further need for a plectrum that is easy to store in connection with a stringed instrument.

SUMMARY

The present invention satisfies these needs. In one aspect of the invention, an improved plectrum is provided.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum has an ergonomic design that provides improved handling and/or that reduces hand fatigue and/or reduces the likelihood of hand injury.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum has the ability to produce different sounds or tones.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum has multiple different pick tips.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum has an ergonomic design including a raised portion that orients the plectrum in the hand of a user with respect to multiple pick tips.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum is attachable to the strings of a stringed instrument.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum for strumming a stringed instrument comprises a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has one or more pick tips having an edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a protrusion that extends radially from the center portion toward the periphery, the protrusion having one or more projections or recesses, wherein the ergonomic contour creates a surface that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum.

In another aspect of the invention, a plectrum for strumming a stringed instrument comprises a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has a first pick tip having a first edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument and a second pick tip having a second edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a first protrusion corresponding to the first pick tip and a second protrusion corresponding to the second pick tip, wherein the ergonomic contour creates a surface that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum.

In another aspect of the invention, a method of strumming a stringed instrument with a plectrum comprises providing a plectrum having a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has a first pick tip having a first edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument and a second pick tip having a second edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a first protrusion corresponding to the first pick tip and a second protrusion corresponding to the second pick tip. The method further comprises contacting the front side with a thumb or other finger, contacting the rear side with a thumb or other finger, and rotating the plectrum between the fingers from a first position where the first pick tip is positioned to strum the stringed instrument to a second position where the second pick tip is positioned to strum the stringed instrument, wherein a different sound is produced in the first and second positions.

DRAWINGS

These features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings which illustrate exemplary features of the invention. However, it is to be understood that each of the features can be used in the invention in general, not merely in the

context of the particular drawings, and the invention includes any combination of these features, where:

FIG. **1**A is a schematic perspective front view of a plectrum according to the invention;

FIG. **1**B is a schematic perspective rear view of the plectrum of FIG. **1**A;

FIG. **2**A is a schematic perspective front view of another version of a plectrum according to the invention;

FIG. **2**B is a schematic perspective rear view of the plectrum of FIG. **2**A;

FIG. **2**C is a schematic front view of the plectrum of FIG. **2**A;

FIG. **2**D is a schematic side view of the plectrum of FIG. **2**A;

FIG. **3**A is a schematic view of the plectrum of FIG. **2**A being contacted by a finger;

FIG. **3**B is a schematic view of the plectrum of FIG. **2**A being contacted by a finger and thumb;

FIG. **4**A is a schematic front view of another version of a plectrum according to the invention;

FIG. **4**B is a schematic perspective view of another version of a plectrum according to the invention; and

FIG. **5** is a schematic perspective view of another version of a plectrum according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to a plectrum for strumming strings of a stringed instrument. Although the plectrum is illustrated and described in some instances in the context of being useful as a guitar pick, the present invention can be useful in other instances. Accordingly, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the examples and embodiments described herein.

A plectrum **100** according to one version of the invention is shown in FIG. **1**A and **1**B. The plectrum **100**, also known as a pick, is grasped by a user and is used to strum a stringed instrument, such as a guitar, mandolin, banjo, bass guitar, and the like. In the version of FIG. **1**A, the plectrum **100** has a body **105** having a generally triangular profile that includes three angled corner portions **110**. At least one of the angled corner portions **110** forms a pick tip **115** having an edge **120** that can be used to contact the strings of a stringed instrument and to strum or pluck one or more of the stings to make music. The plectrum **100** has a front face **125** and a rear face **130**. A user grasps the plectrum **100** by contacting the front face **125** with the user's thumb and the rear face **130** with a user's finger, such as an index finger and/or middle finger. The plectrum **100** is thus squeezed between the user's thumb and finger in such a way that a pick tip **115** and its associated edge **120** is positioned so that it may contact the strings of the stringed instrument. The plectrum **100** may be made from any suitable material, such as one or more of plastic, such as nylon, Delrin, celluloid, rubber, felt, tortoiseshell, wood, metal, glass, tagua, stone, and the like.

The plectrum **100** may be gripped and manipulated in any of numerous manners. For example, the plectrum **100** may be gripped with two fingers, such as the thumb and the index finger or the thumb and the middle finger. Alternatively, the plectrum may be gripped with three fingers, such as the thumb, the index finger, and the middle finger. The motion of the plectrum **100** against the strings of the stringed instrument also can vary from user to user. For example, a user may hold the plectrum very stiffly between the thumb and index finger, locking the thumb joint and striking with the surface of the pick nearly parallel to the string. Alternatively, a user may use a technique where the thumb joint is bent on the downstroke and straightened on the upstroke, causing the tip of the pick to move in a circular pattern, which can allow speed and fluidity. Many rock guitarists use a flourish or pick slide that involves scraping the pick along the length of a round wound string. Whatever the grip and motion, the user of a plectrum must apply substantial gripping pressure in order to keep the plectrum from slipping. This pressure can place tremendous stress on the fingers, hands, and wrists of the user, especially when used over prolonged periods of time.

Accordingly, in order to help alleviate some of the stresses associated with playing the stringed instrument, in one version of the plectrum **100** of the invention a front ergonomic contour **135** is provided on the front face **125** of the plectrum **100**. The front ergonomic contour **135** includes one or more front projections and/or recesses **140**. The front projections and/or recesses **140** create a front surface **145** that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of the user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum **100**. Additionally or alternatively, as shown in FIG. **1**B, the plectrum **100** may include a rear ergonomic contour **150** on its rear face **130**. The rear ergonomic contour **150** may include one or more rear projections and/or recesses **155** create a rear surface **160** that is contactable by the index or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum **100**. The plectrum **100** may include a front ergonomic contour **135**, a rear ergonomic contour **150**, or both. When both are provided, the front ergonomic contour **135** and the rear ergonomic contour may have the same shape or may be differently shaped.

The front ergonomic contour **135** and/or the rear ergonomic contour **150** extend outwardly from the front face **125** and/or rear face **120**, respectively, of the plectrum **100** to provide improved ergonomics for the user. The front surface **145** is shaped to receive a thumb of a user so that the user may more easily grasp the plectrum **100** with the thumb. The front projections and/or recesses **140** conform comfortably to the thumb and provide additional friction or a perch for the thumb, and thus the plectrum **100** with the front ergonomic contour **135** can be secured under the thumb with less thumb stress and pressure. When less pressure is needed, the soft tissue in the hand can be less strained and the wrist can move more freely. As a result, the user can experience less hand fatigue, discomfort, and fewer wrist ailments, such as carpel tunnel syndrome. In like manner, the rear ergonomic contour **150** with its rear projections and/or recesses **155** conform comfortably to a finger of the user and provide additional friction or perches for the finger. As a result of the front ergonomic contour **135** and/or the rear ergonomic contour **150**, the plectrum **100** can be grasped with decreased pinching pressure which can not only reduce injury but can in some cases loosen the wrist and improve guitar playing ability.

In the version of FIG. **1**A, the front ergonomic contour **135** of the plectrum **100** includes one or more front radially extending protrusions **165**. The front radially extending protrusions are raised portions that protrude from the front face **125** and extend from the center portion **170** of the plectrum towards the periphery **175** of the plectrum **100**. The front radially extending protrusion projects **165** away from a surface of the angled corner portions **110** so that it rises forwardly out of a plane generally formed by the angled corner portions **110**. On the front radially extending protrusion **165** is a recessed portion **180** that forms a concave divot in the front radially extending protrusion **165**. The front radially extending protrusion **165** and the recessed portion **180** form the front surface **145** that is adapted to contact the thumb or other finger of the user. The recessed portion **180**

can be a concave surface, such as by being partially bowl shaped, partially cylindrically shaped, partially boxed shaped, or the like or a combination of any of these shapes. In the version of FIG. **1**A, the front radially extending protrusion **165** includes one or more lobes **185** where each lobe **185** has a recessed portion **180** in the form of a bowl **190**. In the version of FIG. **1**A, the front ergonomic contour **135** provides a stabilization cradle for the user's thumb. The design accommodates a broad range of hand sizes by creating a bowl-shaped platform for the thumb to rest upon during strumming. The front ergonomic contour **135** may include three lobes **185**, as shown. An increased width of the grip platform creates a more stable surface for the user to handle.

To further help alleviate some of the stresses associated with playing the stringed instrument, and as shown in FIG. **1**B, in one version of the plectrum **100** of the invention a rear ergonomic contour **150** is provided on the rear face **130** of the plectrum **100**. The rear ergonomic contour **150** includes one or more rear radially extending protrusions **195** extending from the center portion **170** towards the periphery **175** of the plectrum **100**. The rear radially extending protrusion **195** projects away from a surface of the angled corner portions **110** so that it rises rearwardly out of a plane generally formed by the angled corner portions **110**. In the version of FIG. **1**B, the rear radially extending protrusion **195** includes a sidewall **200** and a substantially flat portion **205**. In the version shown, the flat portions **205** lie substantially in a plane generally parallel to a plane containing the angled corner portions **110** and/or the edges **120**. The sidewall **200** and the flat portion **205** make up the rear surface **160** that is adapted to contact the finger of the user to provide for improved contact between the finger and the plectrum **100**. By providing a perch for the finger, grip pressure needed to hold the plectrum **100** can be reduced.

As can also be seen in FIG. **1**A, the lobes **185** of the front radially extending protrusion **165** can include a body that is tilted so that the end of the lobe **185** near the periphery **175** of the plectrum **100** is a greater distance from the front face **125** than the portion of the lobe **185** near the center portion **170**. In one version, the end of the lobe **185** near the periphery **175** extends from the front face **125** in a manner so that a slot **210** is provided between the end of the lobe **185** and a portion of the front face **125** lying in the plane containing the three angled corner portions **110**. Alternatively, the entire lobe **185** may extend from the front face **125** without a slot.

In the particular version of FIG. **1**A, the front ergonomic contour **135** is made up of three front radially extending protrusions **165**, each of which are raised from the front face **125** and each of which extend outwardly from the center **170** of the plectrum **100**. The front radially extending protrusions **165** in this version are substantially equally spaced around the front face **125** so that they are about **120** degrees from one another. Similarly, the rear ergonomic contour **160** in the particular version of FIG. **1**B is made up of three rear radially extending protrusions **195** that extend outwardly from the center **170** of the plectrum **100**. The rear radially extending protrusions **195** in this version are substantially equally spaced around the rear face **130** so that they are about 120 degrees from one another.

Another version of a plectrum **100** is shown in FIGS. **2**A through **2**D. As can be seen in FIG. **2**A, the front ergonomic contour **135** in this version has one or more, such as three, front radially extending protrusions **165** having a recess **180** with a U-shaped profile. Within the recess **180** are optionally provided one or more ridges **215** or other-shaped protrusions to provide additional contact surfaces for the thumb or other finger. Also provided in the version of FIGS. **2**A through **2**D are concave recesses **220** on or near the flat portions **205** of the rear radially extension protrusions **195**. The concave recesses **220** can be provided along the direction of the rear radially extending protrusions **195**, or as shown in FIG. **2**B, can be provided between adjacent rear radially extending protrusions **195**. In the version shown, a concave recess **220** is provided **180** degrees from a flat portion **205**. This allows the tip of a finger to be received within the concave recess **220** when the finger is holding the plectrum **100** by contacting an opposite flat portion **205**, as shown in FIG. **3**A.

Also as shown in the version of FIGS. **2**A through **2**D, the plectrum **100** can be provided with a opening **225** in its center portion **170**. The opening allows the thumb and finger to contact one another when grasping the plectrum **100**, as shown in FIG. **3**B. The contact between the thumb and finger provides improve feel for the user. In addition, the opening **225** can include a wall with some thickness to further aid in the grasping of the plectrum **100**. Also, the opening **225** and the contact between the thumb and finger allow the plectrum **100** to be easily rotated about an axis extending through the opening **225** which is important for reasons to be explained.

The plectrum **100** of the present invention may be provided with multiple pick tips **115** that are each the same or different. In one version, the plectrum **100** comprises a plurality of different pick tips **115** and in the version shown comprises three different pick tips **115**. In this version, each pick tip **115** may have a different size, shape, and/or material that provides each pick tip **115** with a particular sound and/or handling characteristic. For example, in the version of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B, each pick tip **115** has a different thickness. By making the pick tips **115** a different thickness, the angles of the edges **120** are different. A thicker pick tip **115** produces an edge **120** with a heavier or wider angle than a thinner pick tip **115**. Generally, the heavier edge **120** will produce what guitar players call a darker sound as opposed to the lighter sound produced by a thinner or sharper angled edge **120**. By providing three pick tips **115** each of differing thicknesses, three different sounds are available to the guitarist. For example, each angled corner portion **110** can be one of: extra light/thin having a thickness of less than about 0.44 mm; light/thin having a thickness of from about 0.45 to about 0.69 mm; medium having a thickness of from about 0.70 to about 0.84 mm, heavy/thick having a thickness from about 0.85 to about 1.20 mm; or extra heavy/thick having an thickness greater than about 1.50 mm. In one version, the plectrum **100** has at least two angled corners with a different thickness. In another version, the plectrum **100** has all three angled corners with a different thickness from one another. The thicknesses, the name of the thicknesses, or other indicator can be marked on the angled corner portions **105**.

Additionally or alternatively, two or more of the angled corner portions **105** can have a different shape than the other or others. The shape of the tip **110** has a large influence on sound. A pointed tip produces a brighter, more focused sound, while a rounded tip produces a rounder, less defined sound. Accordingly, one of more of the pick tips **115** can have a more or less pointed edge **120** than the other or others. In another version, the overall size of pick tip can affect the sound generated. Therefore, in one version, one or more of the pick tips **115** can be a different size than the others. An example of this version is shown in FIG. **4**A. In this version, the three pick tips **115** include a different sized pick tip **230**. The different sized pick tip **230** can have a front face area that is 95% or less than the front face area of another pick tip **115**. In another version, the different sized

pick tip **230** can have a front face area that is 105% or more than the front face area of another pick tip **115**. The different shape can also be provided in other ways, such as shown in FIG. **4**B. In this version, different sizes and/or shaped apertures **235** are provided in the different pick tips **115**. These aperture configurations can alter the sound produced by the different pick tips.

The front radially extending protrusions **165** and/or the rear radially extending protrusions **195** can be arranged so that they correspond to a pick tip **115**. By correspond it is meant that at least one of the protrusions can be associated with one of the pick tips and another protrusion can be associated with a different pick tip. For example, one protrusion may be contacted by a thumb or other finger when a first pick tip is being used, and the second protrusion may be positioned so that it is contacted in substantially the same position when the second pick tip is being used. Alternatively, the protrusions may be positioned so they are contacted in a noticeably different manner to indicate to the user which pick tip is being used. In the version of FIGS. **1**A and **1**B and the version of FIGS. **2**A through **2**D, the radially extending protrusions **165**, **195** are equally spaced around the plectrum **100** and are equally offset from a pick tip **115**. In this manner, no matter which pick tip **115** is used, the front ergonomic contour **135** and/or the rear ergonomic contour **150** will feel substantially the same within the fingers of the user. Alternatively or additionally, the front ergonomic contour **135** and/or the rear ergonomic contour **150** can contain a textural indictor to indicate to the user which pick tip **115** is being used.

In use, a user grasps the plectrum **100** between two of the user's fingers, such as with the thumb contacting the front face **125** and the index finger contacting the rear face **130**, as shown in FIG. **3**B. The user can grasp the plectrum **100** in any manner that is comfortable to the user. When grasped in a first position, a first pick tip **115** will be positioned so that it can strum a stringed instrument. The user can then rotate the plectrum **100** between the user's fingers to a second position where a second pick tip is in a position to strum a stringed instrument. The rotation can be facilitated by the opening **225** in the center portion. The opening **225** can be located so that a central axis passing through the opening is the axis of rotation of the plectrum in rotating from the first position to the second position. By touching the fingers together through the opening **225** it is easy to rotate the plectrum about the axis of rotation. Also, by providing the protrusions in a manner that they each correspond to a pick tip, a user can feel when a pick tip is properly positioned in a location when the pick tip can strum a stringed instrument.

FIG. **4**B also shows a version of a plectrum **100** of the invention which is designed and configured to be stowably attached to the stringed instrument. FIG. **4**B shows a plurality of strings, such as guitar strings running along the neck of a guitar. In this version, the slot **210** in the plectrum **100** is sized and shaped to receive a string. By sizing the slots **210** properly, two of the slots **210** can receive an upper string and a third slot **210** can receive a lower string **310**, or vice versa, so that the plectrum **100** can be held by compression between the upper string and the lower string. One or more intermediate strings may also pass over the plectrum **100** when stored between the upper string and the lower string to additionally compress the plectrum **100** against the neck of the guitar.

In the versions shown, the plectrum **100** has a general shape of an equilateral triangle. In other versions, the plectrum **100** can have a general shape other than an equilateral triangle. For example, the plectrum can be in the general form of an acute isosceles triangle with two equal rounded corners and a third corner less rounded. In yet other versions, the plectrum **100** can be circular, oval, square, rectangular, or any other geometric shape.

The plectrum **100** may be made from a single piece of material, such as being a single piece of molded plastic. Alternatively, the plectrum **100** may be made of a mdodular design. In yet another version, as shown in FIG. **5**, the plectrum **100** may comprise an ergonomic jacket **240** into which a pick tip **115**, such as a conventional pick may be inserted. The ergonomic jacket **240** includes a front ergonomic contour **135** and/or a rear ergonomic contour **150**. The ergonomic jacket **240** has a slot **245** sized and shaped to releasably receive the pick tip.

The versions described and illustrated show exemplary sizes and shapes and relative dimensions for a plectrum **100**. These dimensions, sizes, and shapes are not intended to limit the invention in any way. In general, the plectrum can have a length from edge **120** to edge **120** of from about 30 mm to about 60 mm, more preferably from about 40 mm to about 50 mm, and most preferably about 44 mm. The width of the plectrum **100** from tip edge **120** to an opposite side is preferably from about 25 mm to about 55 mm, more preferably from about 35 mm to about 45 mm, and most preferably about 40 mm. The thickness of the angled corner portions **110** can range from any of the dimensions discussed above. The thickness of the front radially extending protrusion **140** at its periphery end and/or the distance from the most outwardly extending portion of the lobe to the front face **125** can be from about 1.7 mm to about 4.7 mm, more preferably from about 2.7 mm to about 3.7 mm, and most preferably about 3.2 mm. The thickness of the rear radially extending protrusion **155** can be from about 1.2 mm to about 4.0 mm, more preferably from about 1.7 mm to about 3.0 mm, and most preferably about 2.2 mm. For different materials, the above dimensional ranges can change accordingly.

Although the present invention has been described in considerable detail with regard to certain preferred versions thereof, other versions are possible, and alterations, permutations and equivalents of the version shown will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon a reading of the specification and study of the drawings. For example, the cooperating components may be reversed or provided in additional or fewer number. Also, the various features of the versions herein can be combined in various ways to provide additional versions of the present invention. Furthermore, certain terminology has been used for the purposes of descriptive clarity, and not to limit the present invention. Throughout this specification and any claims appended hereto, unless the context makes it clear otherwise, the term "comprise" and its variations such as "comprises" and "comprising" should be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated element, limitation, or step but not the exclusion of any other elements, limitations, or steps. Therefore, any appended claims should not be limited to the description of the preferred versions contained herein and should include all such alterations, permutations, and equivalents as fall within the true spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A plectrum for strumming a stringed instrument, the plectrum comprising:

a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has one or more pick tips having an edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and

an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a protrusion rising outwardly from a plane containing the one or more pick tips and that extends radially from the center portion toward the periphery, the protrusion having one or more projections or recesses,

wherein the ergonomic contour creates a surface that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum.

2. A plectrum according to claim **1** wherein the body has a first pick tip and a second pick tip and wherein the first pick tip is different than the second pick tip.

3. A plectrum according to claim **2** wherein first pick tip is different than the second pick tip by having a different size, shape, or material.

4. A plectrum according to claim **2** wherein the ergonomic contour comprises a second protrusion that extends radially from the center portion toward the periphery, wherein each protrusion is associated with a different pick tip.

5. A plectrum according to claim **1** wherein the protrusion comprises a concave recess.

6. A plectrum according to claim **1** wherein the ergonomic contour is on the front side and wherein the plectrum further comprises an ergonomic contour on the rear side, the ergonomic contour on the rear side having a protrusion that extends radially from the center portion toward the periphery.

7. A plectrum according to claim **6** wherein the ergonomic contour on the front side comprises a recess and wherein the ergonomic contour on the rear side comprises a flat portion.

8. A plectrum according to claim **6** wherein the ergonomic contour on the front side comprises three protrusions, wherein the ergonomic contour on the rear side comprises three protrusions, and wherein there are three different pick tips.

9. A plectrum according to claim **1** wherein the center portion comprises an opening so that a finger contacting the front side of the plectrum can touch a finger contacting the rear side of the plectrum.

10. A plectrum for strumming a stringed instrument, the plectrum comprising:

a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has a first pick tip having a first edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument and a second pick tip having a second edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and

an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a first protrusion corresponding to the first pick tip and a second protrusion corresponding to the second pick tip, wherein the center portion is between the first protrusion and the first pick tip and wherein the center portion is between the second protrusion and the second pick tip,

wherein the ergonomic contour creates a surface that is contactable by the thumb or other finger of a user to aid in the gripping of the plectrum.

11. A plectrum according to claim **10** wherein the first pick tip is different in size, shape, or material than the second pick tip.

12. A plectrum according to claim **10** wherein the body further comprises a third pick tip and wherein the ergonomic contour further comprises a third protrusion corresponding to the third pick tip.

13. A plectrum according to claim **12** wherein the pick tips are substantially equally spaced around the periphery of the body and wherein the protrusions are substantially equally spaced around the front side or rear side.

14. A plectrum according to claim **10** wherein the ergonomic contour is on the front side and further comprising an ergonomic contour on the rear side, wherein the ergonomic contour on the back side comprises a first protrusion corresponding to the first pick tip and a second protrusion corresponding to the second pick tip.

15. A plectrum according to claim **10** wherein the center portion comprises an opening so that a finger contacting the front side of the plectrum can touch a finger contacting the rear side of the plectrum.

16. A method of strumming a stringed instrument with a plectrum, the method comprising:

providing a plectrum having:

a body having a front side, a rear side, a center portion, and a periphery, wherein the body has a first pick tip having a first edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument and a second pick tip having a second edge adapted to strum a stringed instrument, and

an ergonomic contour on the front side or the rear side of the body, the ergonomic contour comprising a first protrusion corresponding to the first pick tip and a second protrusion corresponding to the second pick tip, wherein each protrusion rises outwardly from a plane containing the first pick tip and the second pick tip and wherein each protrusion has one or more projections or recesses;

contacting the front side with a thumb or other finger;

contacting the rear side with a thumb or other finger; and

rotating the plectrum between the fingers from a first position where the first pick tip is positioned to strum the stringed instrument to a second position where the second pick tip is positioned to strum the stringed instrument,

wherein a different sound is produced in the first and second positions.

17. A method according to claim **16** wherein the center portion has an opening and wherein the method comprises rotating the plectrum about a central axis of the opening.

18. A plectrum according to claim **1** wherein the protrusion rises outwardly from the plane containing the one or more pick tips by at least about 1.7 mm.

19. A plectrum according to claim **4** wherein each protrusion is associated with a different pick tip located on the opposite side of the center portion from each protrusion.

20. A method according to claim **16** wherein the protrusion rises outwardly from the plane containing the first pick tip and the second pick tip by at least about 1.7 mm.

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